

***Providence* Continues the Journey of Pottersville Musician**

Gordon Thomas Ward Releases Second CD

By CHARLIE ZAVALICK, Editor, January 3, 2019

BEDMINSTER TWP. – He’s been called a Renaissance man and New Jersey’s own troubadour. And Pottersville resident Gordon Thomas Ward did little to change that perception in 2018, releasing *Providence*, his second music CD, and performing along the east coast in support of the recording.

A former history teacher and radio deejay, he’s a songwriter, musician, storyteller, published author, Podcast host and lecturer who’s made numerous presentations over the years at local libraries and other public sites.

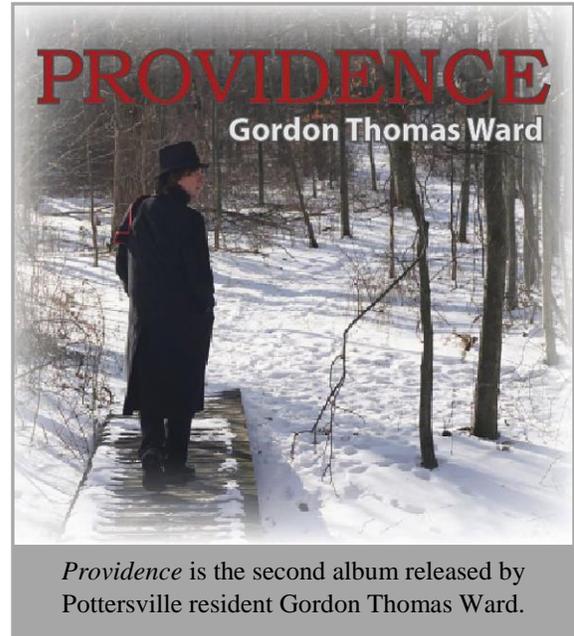
Ward is also a husband and the father of two. He said he largely put his performance career on hold while his children were growing up – but is now hitting the road again.

“I was in bands all through high school and college and a little afterwards,” he said, “but I stopped performing when I decided to stay home with the kids.”

But now that his son, Cory, is 22 and in college, and daughter Melina, 31, is married and living in Massachusetts, his schedule has picked up.

“At this stage of the game it’s easier to throw my stuff in my car and go,” he said, noting that he now performs “about twice a week on average.”

Nowadays he usually plays solo with acoustic guitar, sometimes at private home shows or other intimate gathering places like wineries. But Ward has gotten exposure at some large venues as well, such as the annual “Musikfest” festival in Bethlehem, Pa.



His wife, Veronica, is a musician as well, he noted, who plays hammered dulcimer among other instruments. She is also a member of bell choirs that perform in the area, including the Raritan Ringers who recently played at the Bernardsville Public Library.

Ward’s 12-song *Providence* CD was produced with Eric Troyer, who also performs with ELO II and The Orchestra, band that plays songs by the successful Electric Light Orchestra.

Troyer has worked with recording stars such as John Lennon and James Taylor during his extensive career, Ward noted.

“I really value the input I get and the collaboration from Eric Troyer,” Ward said. “He’s a huge part of my sound. That relationship with the engineer and co-producer is very important.”

“It’s a good marriage – I wouldn’t think of working with anyone else,” he added. “We both know the sound that I’m looking for.”

The CD was produced over a period of about two years at the Charlestown Road Studios in Hampton.



Left to Right: Mik Kaminski, Gordon Thomas Ward, and Eric Troyer

Instrumentalists on the CD include violinist Mik Kaminski, whose work was featured on many of the great ELO hits.

“He’s the violinist that you know from all the classic ELO songs from the ‘70s and ‘80s,” Ward said. “It’s incredible to work with these guys and now have them as your friends.”

Providence is generally considered in the folk genre.

“It’s an Americana album,” Ward said. “There’s a little bit of everything on there. There’s slow songs, faster songs. Some rock, some folk, some country. That’s what I think is the beauty of the record. Every song brings a different flavor.”

The theme of the CD “is the arc of life,” he said. “Things we anticipate happening in life, where we’re going, where we’ve been. That’s what *Providence* is all about.”

The CD has gotten extensive publicity in the U.S. and Europe, Ward said – and “a ton of reviews.”

Ward was given a glowing review by writer Jodi Marxbury on the Indie Band Guru website, <https://indiebandguru.com/gordon-thomas-ward-providence/>.

“Over the last half decade, singer/songwriter Gordon Thomas Ward has been making his mark on the indie world by writing songs that question his listener’s perceptions of melody and tonality in a way that is completely different than any of his peers have,” she wrote. “Now in his sophomore release *Providence*, the highly anticipated follow up to 2013’s ‘Welcome to the Past,’ Ward makes his official foray into the mainstream with his most polished compositions to date. It’s his sleekest batch of songs yet, but any notion that Ward is starting to sell out is instantly quashed the moment one presses play on track one.

“In an era where every artist seems to be content to engage in the sordid practice of sonic overindulgence, Gordon Thomas Ward is adept at using minimalism to create his soundscapes. The stark contrast in his work compared to his closest rivals is highlighted as a result, but it doesn’t dwarf the intensity of his songcraft in the least. If anything I would say that it makes Ward seem a lot more thoughtful in his composing, even more relatable since he isn’t putting a lot of filler between himself and the audience trying to understand him.

“*Providence* promises more thrills, chills and introspective moments than any record I’ve heard or reviewed this year, and I think that it will likely be the album to put Ward’s brand into the pop lexicon once and for all. He’s got all the makings of a modern pop superstar, and with the right platform, the spotlight is almost certain to belong to him and him alone.”

Ward said the CD has been listed on Global Adult Contemporary charts and was “Grammy Balloted” – the step before being actually nominated for a Grammy Award.

Local References

Ward often draws on his local background in his song writing.

His first CD, “Welcome to the Past,” included a song about Phyllis Parker, the well-known ghost of the old Bernardsville Library building. Another, “Hardscrabble Life,” references Bernardsville, where he grew up.



Pottersville resident Gordon Thomas Ward released his second album earlier this year and is already at work on a third.

Songs on the new CD, such as “Lamington Dew,” mention the Lamington River that flows through his hometown, and “The Horseman” that refers to the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge and the legend of the headless hessian that’s believed to have inspired Washington Irving’s “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow.”

Providence includes lengthy songs that deal with serious social issues such as gun violence in “How Many More.” Child abuse is confronted in the title track.

The CD also includes the ballad “One Kiss,” that reflects on the various types of kisses shared during a lifetime.

Ward said his musical influences include recording artists such as the late Dan Fogelberg, Jackson Brown and Neil Young, and “to some extent” Judy Mitchell.

“I really love her lyrics,” he said. “I grew up with the singer-song writers of the ‘60s and ‘70s. It’s not that I sound like any of them, but as far as how I approach a song, it’s similar.”

His new CD offers a glimpse into the wide variety of his musical influences and inspirations.

“I have influences from classical artists, rock, all different genres,” he said. “It’s an amalgamation of what’s in my head, from hard rock, to Bach to jazz, country and folk.”

Ward just turned 60 years old, but said age is no barrier when it comes to producing music these days.

“I got in at the right time as far as being an indie artist,” he said. “There’s a ton of people out there that are younger than me, but also an incredible amount of people who are also older than me. It’s a pretty even playing field out there now.”

Ward has also had four books published, along with a self-published book of poetry.

His books include *Life On The Shoulder*, about his travels on the Lewis and Clark trail, *A Bit of Earth*, which is about the history of the land where he grew up, *Tracing Infinity*, an spiritual book, and his best-selling book to date, *Ghosts of Central Jersey*.

“People love ghosts,” he noted.

Ward said he is not currently planning to write another book but remains open to the possibility.

“I’m not ruling out another book but the inspiration hasn’t struck me yet,” he said. “Never say never, but most of my focus now is on the music.”

Third CD Coming

He is planning a third CD, however.

“There’s a third album coming out for sure,” he said, noting that he has already written about a dozen new songs for the project.

“I haven’t really grappled with the theme of the record yet,” he said. “I’m one of those guys who still thinks a record has to have a theme.”

The next recording “will be much less produced” than his second CD, he said.

“I want to have a record that people can buy that will get closer to the live sound, like if you saw me in a show,” he said. “I want to strip it down more than *Providence*.”

Eventually, Ward said he also “wants to get to the point where I’m writing songs for other people as well.”

“But performance will always be part of what I do.”

While at times his travel schedule can be “stretched,” he said, “I love what I do and I wouldn’t trade it for the world. I’ve met some extraordinary people in my life.”

For more information on the artist and *Providence*, go to <http://www.gordonthomasward.com/music/providence.html>.

The CD can also be purchased at <https://store.cdbaby.com/cd/gordonthomasward5>.